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*THE ETHICS OF JESUS AND THE MODERN MIND<sup>1</sup>*

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Many times during the past half-century the question raised by Strauss, "Are we still Christian?" has been asked by other persons. The vast changes in thought which have taken place within this period have led to this. The difference between the ancient and modern thought-worlds are numerous, far-reaching, and now acutely felt. We live in a universe infinite in extent, eternal in duration, dynamic in all its elements, law-abiding in all its forces and areas, developing through an immanent process of evolution by resident forces, and moving on to a far-off divine event when the purposes of God will be realized in a perfected humanity.

Our fathers, on the other hand, lived in a world recent in the date of its origin, small in extent, and made by fiat; its laws statutes to be set aside at the pleasure of its maker; its nature deranged by the sin of man; the historic process degenerative; and its end catastrophic.

It is these differences in world-view which have made many persons ask the question, "Are we still Christian?" Have we not broken connection with the past, and even with the Christ who cherished the ancient world-view? Has there not come about a discontinuity in thought? Does not this break in thought involve also a discontinuity in faith? Can the spiritual content of the old world-view be separated from its framework of thought? Can the soul of faith survive the passing of this corruptible body of thought? To these crucial questions, some give negative answers, and confess that they can no longer call themselves Christians; they no longer consider themselves as maintaining the continuity of thought with the Christ of history.

<sup>1</sup> Address at the opening of the academic year at Andover Theological Seminary and Harvard Divinity School, September 29, 1911.

Others, however, answer in the affirmative. They admit that they no longer hold to the ancient world of the church and of the Bible, but they still maintain vital continuity with all the profound things of the Christian faith. When they think of the nature of the ultimate reality in which the universe and humanity are grounded, from which they both come and to which they move; when they reason concerning the purpose of the ultimate reality for the universe and humanity; and when, still further, they consider the moral character of this ultimate reality, then they find themselves thinking the thoughts of Jesus after him. They interpret the nature of this reality in the terms of personality, its character in the terms of Christlikeness, its purposes in the terms of the divine kingdom. They are conscious of their fellowship of thought with the master in these supreme matters of life. In all that concerns the inner and intensive meaning and worth of the world and man and God they trace the continuity. However much they may differ in their thought with respect to the outer or extensive meaning of these realities through their knowledge of the researches of science, the vast human material of historic study, and the deep ponderings and comprehensive views of philosophy, nevertheless they only come to the true secret of things when their thoughts concerning the heart of reality are the truths of the mind of Jesus. Discontinuity concerning the framework of the world there must be, but continuity with respect to the ultimate realities there can be and there is.

There is, however, another group of men who are not so ready to give either a positive or negative reply to these questions. Their minds are in suspense; they are not so certain in their doubts as the one group, nor so sure in their faith as the other. They are not an inconsiderable number in our day; they are found inside as well as outside the churches, and their condition creates a serious situation, and one to the help of which the Christian thinker must come.

In view of this crisis in matters of faith we are urged by some men to abandon the ground of faith and go over entirely to the field of conduct, and to invite to meet with us there all sorts and conditions of minds, irrespective of their faith in, or interpre-

tation of, the ultimate realities of life. It is claimed that this procedure would not only be the strategic thing to do, but the right thing, since the Christian religion moves wholly in the region of the ethical.

This invitation ignores, I fear, very important matters. It is not quite fair to the men whose difficulties are with matters of faith to ask them to forget the same and go over to the region of practical interests. These very interests have no great value, if the foundations of faith are insecure. Nor does Christianity move wholly in the region of the ethical. It is primarily a faith, and its ethics grows out of its faith. Then, too, it ignores the fact that there is at present scarcely any more agreement in matters of Christian ethics than in matters of the Christian faith. The question, "Are we still Christian?" is now raised concerning the ethics of Jesus no less than the faith of Jesus. Yesterday men outside as well as those inside the churches were in practical agreement on Christian ethics as giving us the great regulative principles for the guidance of our life. Even Mill, while he thought Christian morality somewhat defective because of its negative character, yet maintained that in the Golden Rule we have a principle which is adequate for all practical purposes of conduct. And while Matthew Arnold criticised the doctrine of the Incarnation of Christ, he highly commended as a practical rule of life the Imitation of Christ.

The situation, however, in these matters has greatly changed in recent years. The Christian moral ideal itself is now called in question. Next to the question concerning the faith of Jesus, the most crucial question now raised with respect to the Christian religion is that which asks whether or not we have broken with the moral ideal, not only of the churches of our own faith and order, or of the historic church, or of the apostles, but also with the moral ideal of Jesus himself.

The question is asked, Is it possible to live according to the ethical demands of Jesus? Can these demands be realized in our modern world? Would not the sincere and earnest effort to practise them involve our whole social structure in ruins? Would it not bring about the end of our civilization? Indeed

the question is raised whether we ought to live in accordance with these teachings. If they contradict our experience, if they would involve such destructive consequences, if they would necessitate our abandonment of the very world we have been hard at work building up, ought we to try to put them into effect?

These questions are raised by ethical students, who take into consideration the evolution of morals and the nature of morality, by publicists who labor for the highest national welfare, by social workers whose sympathies are deep and wide and whose consciences are quick to social demands, and no less by New Testament scholars who have returned to the sources of the Christian moral ideal and studied it historically rather than confessionally. These questions are not only live questions; they are the life-question of the Christian religion. They find expression in popular periodicals as well as in technical journals and scholarly books. This situation is particularly true of Germany, to a lesser degree it exists in England, and it will soon be acute with us.

There must be an attempt to hold the Christian moral ideal in the full light of the ethical thought of our own day and generation, and there must be an inner unity of mind, if we would live at peace and have power. We are persuaded that the kind of allegiance Jesus demands is a loyalty based on the conviction that his fundamental moral claims are reasonable and just. If it were necessary, it would be better to differ from him conscientiously than to agree with him conventionally.

Let us then in the first place observe where the apparent, if not real, break comes between the modern mind and the ethical demands of Jesus. It is primarily in the different attitudes taken towards the world and the worth of the present life. The following contrasts are set forth and emphasized.

The first contrast concerns the necessity and importance of the economic conditions of our earthly life. These have their justification in their nature and in the part they play in the advancing civilization of the world. The richer, fuller life of culture is largely conditioned by these economic values. Wealth therefore has its place, and foresight is a virtue.

Now when we go into the gospels, and read there the teach-

ings of Jesus concerning these matters, we cannot but note the contrast. We learn that we are not to lay up treasures upon the earth; we are to take no thought for the morrow; the chief emphasis falls upon the dangers of wealth; the struggle for existence and all that it involves is not recognized. It is maintained by some that life in our world is impossible on these terms.

Again, we have a high appreciation of the heritage of civilization. We take keen interest in science, in its pursuit of knowledge, and in its pushing further into the confines of the unknown. We delight in the beautiful, and find deep joy in the ministry of art. We gird up our loins and light our lamps for the strenuous task of philosophic interpretation of the meaning of our world. We know the strength of the bonds of friendship, and feel the inspiration of another's confidence, and share in the common joys of life.

Now when we read the gospels, we find to our delight that there is some appreciation of these high values of culture on the part of Jesus. He stands near to us in his appreciation of the beauty of the flowers of the field, in his keen interest in the processes of growth, in his poetic productions in the form of parables, and in his friendly intercourse with human beings. And yet the surprise comes that there is no full recognition of these ends of life as parts and factors in the kingdom, and that no ethical instructions are given the disciples concerning them. They appear to play no important part in Jesus' thought, nor to have any essential place in the kingdom.

Still further. We are believers in the positive life. We love the heroic, and we are aggressive. We want to express ourselves, to realize the possibilities of our nature, and to prove true to our individualities. Self-realization is the end we set before ourselves. We want to be something. We have little sympathy with the desire to be nothing. And we go in for the strenuous thing. We desire to test our physical prowess and moral capacity. We like the task that counts for something in the life of the world and in the progress of civilization. The morality that appeals to us is the morality of masters, the morality of power, control, progress.

Now when we read the ethical demands of the gospels, we find considerable emphasis on the negative and the passive, self-denial, renunciation, non-resistance, turning the other cheek, giving the other garment also: these are the strange notes we hear. We have here apparently the morality of the "weak brother." Nietzsche calls it the morality of slaves.

Then, too, we have a growing social consciousness and conscience. Our social interest in men is not merely sympathetic, it is also righteous. We are interested in them not only as victims of our social order, or of the tyranny of the strong, but also interested in them as men who have a right to be treated with respect, and who deserve that the causes of the wrongs they suffer be remedied. The least of the children of men have a right to participate in the blessings of civilization. The fruits of culture are not for the few. And we are concerned more and more with the social causes of human misery. We must try to catch the thieves who waylay the man who travels from Jerusalem to Jericho, as well as take care of the victim of their wrongs, that we have to do today. We demand and work for radical social changes. Ours is a democratic morality, touched with the spirit of revolution.

In the noble sympathy of the gospels, so pure in its source and so genuine in its expression and so broad in its reach, there is full agreement between the ethics of Jesus and the modern conscience. It is, however, at the points of the social causes of wrongs that the difference arises. The personal rather than the social is the distinctive note of the ethical teaching of Jesus, and personal sympathy is emphasized rather than social wrongs. And the brotherhood contemplated is one selected out of the world rather than a world-redemption itself.

Once more, we are optimistic in our outlook upon the world. We find resident forces at work in the historic processes that bid us hope and be of good cheer. We are believers in progress. The idea of revolution has taken possession of our minds. It is our regulative idea. The past is interpreted by it; and the future is confidently awaited, and is expected to follow the same laws. This is the mood in which men now do their work in the world.

That there is an optimism in the gospels is undoubtedly, but it

concerns the kingdom of God, the transcendent good, rather than the world. The outlook on this world is pessimistic enough. It is in the bondage of sin. It is in the power of the devil. The earth-forces are evil. There are no latent sources, nor resources, in them for their recovery and for the victory of the good. The only hope for the world is beyond the world. It is in the apocalyptic, catastrophic coming of the kingdom. The mood is eschatological.

This non-worldly, transcendent, ethical teaching of Jesus is explained in various ways.

There is, first of all, the "*zeitgeschichtliche*," or historical, explanation. Jesus belonged to another civilization than ours. He lived in a pre-capitalistic age; he passed his days in a small town; he lived as a member of a subject race, in a corner of the world, into which, however, with the soldiers and traders came something of the spirit of the great outside world. Corresponding to this historical situation in which Jesus lived, his gospel was idyllic. It was beautiful, and adapted to its day and its place. It was the gospel of the poor. Its ethical directions contemplate life under such conditions. Not one of them is out of place in such circumstances. They are feasible, they are obligatory, indeed they were realized by the disciples. Were our conditions the same today, they would have the same relevancy; and they have relevancy just in so far as they are similar, as in our personal relations in small circles.

Our civilization, however, is very different. We live in a capitalistic era and our modern states are world-powers; the struggle for existence on the part of men is intense; the necessity for great and strong states, ultimately based on force, is inevitable; the existence of these states requires equipment for possible, and indeed inevitable, wars. For such states, and for citizenship in them, and for economic success, the ethical demands of Jesus have no force, his ethical teaching no relevancy. This is the position maintained by Friedrich Naumann, and this is the explanation he gives for the character of Jesus' ethics, and for the necessity he is under to have recourse to another ethical standard for his life in the modern state.

Another explanation offered is in the terms of the eschato-

logical expectation of Jesus. The reason that Jesus gave such ethical directions concerning laying up treasures in heaven rather than on earth, carelessness concerning the morrow, non-resistance toward wrong-doers, and even love for our enemy, was that he expected the end of the world to come shortly. When one expects the end to come soon, he can fulfil all these requirements. This we find in the conduct of persons who time and again throughout the whole course of history have expected the speedy end of the world. So also in the case of the early Christians, instructed by St. Paul, and no less in the case of the disciples instructed by Jesus. His demands were to get ready for the end. This was the great positive requirement. The negative requirements were in view of the same event. The positive and the negative ethical conduct was the expression of the disposition engendered by this hope.

This is an explanation of the ethical demands of Jesus in the terms of an "eschatological interim ethics," set forth by Johannes Weiss in 1900 in *Die Predigt Jesu vom Reiche Gottes*, later reaffirmed in his New Testament commentary, also by Ehrhard in *Der Grundcharakter der Ethik Jesu*, and more recently by Schweitzer in his work, *Von Reimarus zu Wrede*. This is the position held by many of the younger German theologians, by modernists like Loisy and Tyrrell, and by many others in England. The eschatological interpretation of the teaching of Jesus has had some influence on scholars, who, however, while conceding that some ethical demands and directions of Jesus may be explained in this way, yet hold that the fundamental ethical teaching of Jesus is not determined by this idea. Nor is the eschatological idea true to the facts when it is made the regnant idea in the mind of Jesus. This is the position held notably by the New Testament scholar Dobschütz, and by the theologian and moralist Herrmann.

The third explanation is given in the terms of the fundamental philosophy of Jesus' life and teaching, in the terms of the religion of redemption. At this point we shall only suggest the line of thought, and shall return to it later. This explanation is based on Jesus' estimate of the ultimate values of life. Here is the fundamental contrast of an immanent-world ethics, and of a

transcendent ethics. The question is, In what are we to find our highest good? in the things of earth or in the things of heaven? in the values of culture or in the values of religion? in the relativities of life or in the absolutes? in things and human beings or in God? In which of these series are we to find our deepest and most enduring satisfaction? In which of them are we to come to the fullest realization of our powers and possibilities? For Jesus the ultimate values of life were the great values; in these men were to find their enduring satisfaction and highest realization. His ethics, therefore, is fundamentally transcendent: this character of his ethics cannot be ignored, nor must it be minimized in the interest of any easy solution of our problem of keeping continuity with the moral ideal of Jesus.

Let us observe now the various historic attitudes taken toward these contrasts between the ethical demands of Jesus and the demands of life in the world.

There is first the apostolic. The first followers of Jesus naturally took the same attitude as their master. For them these contrasts did not really exist. They did not create for them a problem. Like their master, they expected the speedy end of the world. Their ethics was of men awaiting the great change. The great values were those pertaining to the kingdom of God about to be established. The things of earth paled in the splendor of the heavenly light of the eternal world. Their citizenship was not on the earth but in heaven; they were subjects of no temporal order, but only of the eternal realm. Their conduct therefore was determined by this hope. Even the closest relation of life, the marriage of two human beings, might well be renounced in view of the situation.

The problem of life here in the world began, however, to make its appearance in consequence of the deferred coming of the Lord. The economic necessity of work, of earning a livelihood, of having means to help the destitute Christians, made itself felt, and Paul demanded that men should work.

The sub-apostolic church was forced to recognize these contrasts in the teaching of Jesus and the necessities of life in the world. The long-deferred consummation, and the gradual fading

of the hope of the Lord's coming at all, created the problem of taking some new attitude towards the world. They were face to face with new situations. They had to live in the world; they had to earn their living; they had to relate themselves to the various callings and tasks of life; they had to take some part in the general social life of the world. Serious ethical questions began to be discussed: how far could Christians, in loyalty still to their religious convictions, lay up treasures on the earth, support the state based on force, take up service in the army, avail themselves of the comforts and luxuries? And, still further, came the question, How participate in the life of the world for its transformation? Here arises in all earnestness the problem with which the church and Christians have been confronted ever since, and before which we find ourselves today.

The attitude of the church in the middle ages, which is still that maintained by the Roman Catholic church, was one of compromise. It held to the non-worldly, transcendent ethics of the gospels and of the early church. The true and higher Christian life centred all its thought and interest on the eternal world and its values. The negative attitude was taken towards the world. Separation from it was necessary. The ideal of the perfect life was the monkish. The priests and nuns were the genuine Christians. They lived on a higher plane than others. They were the persons loyal to the strict ethical demands of Jesus. They were his uncompromising followers. However, all could not be priests and nuns; the common mass of people had still to live in the world, do their day's work, earn their living, build their homes, hold society together, and maintain the church itself, and make for a Christian civilization. But this life was regarded as on a lower level; it involved compromise with the world: it necessitated either the abandonment or the deferred fulfilment of the non-worldly ethical demands of Jesus. Thus two standards of morality were not only recognized by the church, but taught and established by it. On the whole, this is still the position maintained by the Catholic church and its ethical teachers.

In the Protestant attitude a break was made with this double standard of morality. It could not tolerate the outer and inner

division involved in this compromise-ethics. There was not only the recognition of the necessity and legitimacy of the vocations of life, but their justification and inculcation. The common man and woman at their tasks in the home or field or store or public office were as highly appreciated as the cloistered monk and nun. Their contribution to the church and the life of the world was more valuable. The service of God was not simply and solely in worship, but also in work, not only in the church, but in the home and society.

Not only the relations of the earthly life, but also the organizations and institutions, were fully recognized and highly appreciated. The state had its functions to fulfil, and society its life to develop and enrich, and civilization its place in relation to the kingdom of God.

It is true that much of Catholicism came over into Protestantism in matters both of dogma and of morals. The recognition of these "earth-tasks" was somewhat defective: Luther and Calvin grounded their justification more on the Old Testament than on the teachings of Jesus, and where the teaching of Jesus was followed, it was taken more as a precept than as a principle; the problem involved in keeping continuity with Christ was not clearly seen nor deeply felt; and their thought of life in the world and its tasks wavered between a pessimistic and optimistic conception; indeed both were under the influence of the Roman Catholic depreciation of the world.

These contradictions are clearly manifest in the movements which have continued these principles and influences. Thus in Pietism we find the non-worldly attitude taken towards life and the cultural values of civilization. Individual piety and separation from the world are its characteristic notes. And even in Puritanism, while there is a true recognition of the state and its great tasks, and a noble insistence upon social righteousness, yet the negative attitude is strong, and the danger imminent that Puritanism become puritanic.

The more positive side of the Reformation, its better appreciation of the goods of life, came to expression in the thought of Schleiermacher, who found in the state and culture the ethically indispensable elements in the good that God wills for his children,

and of Rothe, who regarded the state rather than the church as at once the nobler and larger factor and sphere for the realization of the will of God.

In the present situation relative to this problem there is, first of all, the attitude which frankly, though sadly, confesses the fact of a break with Jesus and the necessity for it, and the acceptance of another ethics than the Christian, relative to all the worldly tasks of life. These tasks have their own ethical necessities and justification and therefore have a right to make their moral demands upon us. Morality is not only grounded in human nature, but it is conditioned for its growth, and has sanction, only as it represents the actual stage which it has reached in its development. Since the world has entered upon its capitalistic era the ethics adapted to it and demanded by it is not one growing out of and suited to a pre-capitalistic era. In all matters therefore that concern the struggle for existence, the economic situation, the building of a great state, we must not look to Christ for direction, but rather to the ethics which belongs to our civilization. This is the position of Naumann, who is significant not from a scholarly point of view, but from the popular, since he has a large influence and expresses pretty accurately the mind of the average man engaged in public life. He says very frankly: "We do not question Jesus when things are concerned which belong in the region of economic and state construction. . . . I vote for the German navy, not because I am a Christian, but because I am a citizen, and because I have learned to renounce looking for fundamental questions of state in the Sermon on the Mount."

On the other hand, we find men who take literally the ethical demands of Jesus in all their sharp non-worldly transcendent meaning. The ethical directions of Jesus, whether spoken to one person or to a group, whether as incidental or fundamental, are taken for infallible guidance for our lives in our infinitely more complex situations. Poverty is accepted, non-resistance is practised, oaths are abjured, even family ties are renounced, and the world with all its fruits of culture is contemned. The great, world-famous representative of this attitude was Tolstoi.

It is not without meaning that, as Naumann comes out of lib-

eral Protestantism, so Tolstoi came out of Greek Catholicism; the one out of a vigorous nation of the west, and the other out of a variously mixed nation of the east. Tolstoi was in revolt against a church and state which press hard on new manifestations of life and efforts at freedom. In this sense his ethics is that of revolt, and yet the hold of the traditional and the authoritative is still strong upon him. He would be free from the dogmatic moral prescriptions of his state and church only to be bound by the ethical prescriptions of Jesus. By his new obedience he would involve the whole state structure and social fabric in ruins: he is a religious and ethical anarchist, the counterpart of the philosophical anarchists who come largely from the same country, and from like situations elsewhere.

The significant and worthful thing, however, in Tolstoi is that he has been able to free himself from the entangling alliances of state and church, and to return from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries into the first century, and find and face the historic Jesus. He certainly moved in the right direction when he entered the gospels. He found it better to break with modern life than to break with Jesus. He would solve our problem by ignoring and abandoning one of the elements which create it.

Neither in the one nor in the other of these attitudes have others been able to find the solution of our problem. They do not feel compelled, with Naumann, to break with Jesus in their life in this world; nor on the other hand, with Tolstoi, to break with the moral situations of modern life and the ethical demands made upon them therein. These men are ready to make many concessions, but they do not feel compelled to make any compromise on the fundamental principles of life which Jesus announces. They allow that these several contrasts, if not so sharp as represented, are nevertheless very real; that the eschatological idea does shape and color some of the ethical demands of Jesus, though it does not explain nor vitiate this ethical ideal; that we cannot imitate the example of Jesus in our complex world in matters of detail, though we can in the greater matters of his spirit in all our relations; that we cannot go to him for ethical instructions on our manifold new tasks, nor should we think to find such for our situation, and yet that we must go to

him still for the fundamental principles of moral life. Differences there are between the men who represent this third attitude, but they are more incidental than fundamental. The two most influential theologians in Germany at present, Herrmann and Troeltsch, illustrate these differences and agreements. The former narrows the sphere of the ethical more than the latter; it covers a smaller area, and the vocations and cultural values of life and civilization are more negatively estimated. Troeltsch recognizes more than Herrmann the moral necessities of life in the world, appreciates more highly cultural values, and finds them more deeply grounded. In short, his ethics is more immanent than Herrmann's. Greater than their differences, however, are their agreements in holding that in the ethics of Jesus we find the deepest principles of life, and that, as a matter of faith, we can cherish the conviction that these principles will be finally realized in the life of man. In this third attitude, with these differences and agreements, here more and there less, are to be classed the greater names of German theology.

Let us now consider the lines of thought which promise a solution of our problem.

It is of fundamental importance that we recognize that the Christian religion is the religion not of law but of the spirit, and that the ethical characteristic of this religion of the spirit is its demand for, and creation of, an autonomous moral life.

The religion of law was overcome in principle by Jesus. He ushered in the religion of the spirit. This religion is not burdened, as was the Jewish religion, with manifold ethical precepts for the guidance of conduct down to the minutest matters of dietetics and hygiene. Nor is it bound to a given stage of social development by fixing its institutions and customs, as in Islam. Some incidental instructions, particular precepts for the guidance of certain persons in given situations, are found in the Christian religion with its ethical teaching, it is true, but these are not its distinctive features, and they are certainly not its fundamental principles. Even the Golden Rule is not a rule, but rather a spirit, and even the law of love is not so much a law as an inner,

pure, and permanent disposition. And the followers whom Jesus sought were not like soldiers, whose duty it is:

“Theirs not to reason why,  
Theirs not to make reply,  
Theirs but to do and die.”

He sought for convinced followers, men whose minds no less than their hearts were in his service. He did not demand imitators of his outward life, but followers of his own free, autonomous spirit. He did not make himself a substitute conscience for men. They were to judge for themselves what was the right. It is true that he quickened and illuminated the consciences of men, and made men free from sin, and from moral and religious confusions of righteousness; and consequently men's judgment of what was right was truer and keener and quicker and saner than before they came under his influence. This indeed came about as a result of their experience of redemption, wrought in their souls by his life and death. He won them for God, for the ultimate things and values and realities of life, and this was at once the condition and the cause of their new conscience.

What Jesus sought, therefore, to accomplish for men, and what he consequently demanded of men, was that their conscience might be illumined and emancipated. They must be able and free to judge for themselves, under his ethical leadership, the great matters of life, as occasions arose and new situations demanded. He did not set himself up as the great casuist of perplexed consciences, but rather as the creator of autonomous consciences. He did in the realm of ethics what he did in the region of church polity: he left men free for their tasks. As in the one case he created spiritual life, which produced the church, but left to the occasion and to the men the kind of church to be organized, and the method of its administration; so also in the other case he created the conscience which was free to determine for itself the right conduct in the given situations of life. As we have learned that worldliness does not consist in the things we seek and use, but in the spirit in which we use them and the purpose to which we put them, so also must we learn that it is the spirit of our life that determines the moral character of our

conduct. There is no real morality that is not autonomous. There is no real free conscience that is not able to determine its course in the world. Jesus did not increase the ethical precepts and principles of life; he reduced them practically to one, the principle or spirit of love. And even this one great moral principle of personal conduct he derived from the new life in the soul in its relation to the ultimate reality of the universe, the Moral God.

The first great moral unification which Jesus created was that of the inner life: the unity of the disposition, the heart united to do its moral tasks, the will master of its impulses and passions and powers, quick to do the behests of duty, and moving out from the centre of its inner life in all directions.

And Jesus set this moral personality, with its autonomous morality, growing out of its new divine life, in the midst of the greater human realities of life. Moral personalities are the great ethical realities. Human beings are the highest moral values of life. Persons, not things, are the ends of conduct. Things find their highest uses in relation to men. They get their value through their social ministry. The economic necessities are necessities because men need them for their life here in the world. The state is founded because human beings have social needs which grow out of their social nature. Cultural values are produced by men, and highly appreciated for their services in the enrichment of life. The institutions of society are established for their social worth and utility. It is man who is the great creator of cultural values. And he is the object of their existence. And he is at the same time the standard by which they are judged. Man is not made for the Sabbath but the Sabbath is made for man, and in like manner the industrial régime, the state, the cultural values, and the whole human world are made for man.

Now it is into right relation with these moral personalities that Jesus sets a man, and contemplates placing each and all. The redeemed man looks out upon the world, and all that he does is done from the inner disposition of love. This leads him to recover the personality of others, to have an enthusiasm for all sorts and conditions of men, to cherish an unconquerable faith

in them, to devote himself to them, and to make any sacrifice to recover them to God, to establish relations of brotherhood, and to make love supreme in their conduct.

It is this new interest in men that determines conduct toward them. This conduct varies with changing conditions: new social situations create new duties, but the disposition of love and the final purpose of conduct in the creation of a moral fellowship remain dominant and regulative through all these changes. They determine the thing to be done in any given situation and at any historic moment in the progress of civilization.

Then, too, we must observe that Jesus' moral demands bring men face to face with the ultimate moral reality of the universe. His morality makes its transcendent demands because the fundamental facts of life necessitate and justify them. Men are set in a moral order that is more ultimate than their desires and their consciences. Their lives are grounded in the eternal reality. They derive their being therefrom; they come with endowments from its wealth; they are placed under an authority that is beyond their caprice; they are called to co-operate in a purpose that expresses the will of the eternal as the goal of all men; they are at once the factors through which and the sphere in which this ultimate moral reality finds expression and realization. In brief, they are the children of God, in and through whom the purposes of the heavenly Father are to be fulfilled.

It is this profound religious conviction that is the deepest thing in the life of Jesus, and the most fundamental truth in his thought. It is life in God, and with God, and for God, and out from God, that we find in all its glory and wonder in the life of Jesus. It is this reality of his religion that gives its deepest principle to his ethics, and makes it distinctively religious and fundamentally transcendent. It places man at the centre of moral reality. All that he does, he does in God and out from God. He no longer stands at the circumference of life, moving towards the centre; but rather at the centre of life moving out towards the circumference. If in his religion he goes through nature and man to God, in his moral life he goes from God to the world and man. This is the dialectic of the Christian moral movement.

And since the God with whom he stands in right personal rela-

tion of love in the Christian religion is the reality in whom all beings find their lives, and from whom they derive their nature, and by whom they are placed in the world and set in social relations, the moral ideal binds a man to the whole of life. It is not an isolated, solitary, individualistic God with whom he has to do, but the God of love, who cherishes a supreme purpose and good for the world, who takes interest in every human being and rules in the affairs of nations, and makes all things new.

If we are thus placed in right relation with God, this relation involves a proper attitude towards the world and man. Whatever interests, therefore, we believe to be divine, whatever the moral situations in which we find ourselves and which we recognize as providential, whatever social good we see is necessary for the progress of the race, these become for us the moral task of life.

This therefore makes Christian ethics transcendent in its supreme good, ultimate in its sources, fundamental in its bases, authoritative in its claims, contemporary in its demands, and progressive in its character.

Now our estimate of the worth of given cultural values, and our attitude towards them, must be determined by our recognition of these fundamental moral realities of the universe: the greatness of our own personalities, the reverent and loving attitude towards all other personalities, and our highest weal in right relations with God. By their service or disservice to these realities are the things of the world to be judged.

This involves the spirit of detachment in our relation to all these things. We must maintain our freedom in our relation to them. Not things but the man must be in the saddle. Man must ever be the master. He must be able to live with these things or without them. He must know, as the great Apostle did, how to abound and how to be abased, and in the one condition as in the other enjoy contentment of soul. He must see the necessity for the attitude demanded by the master: the readiness to renounce all these values if the moral situation demands it. He must respond to the heroic appeal: to count the interests of God of greater value, and their right to his life of renunciation. In times of national crises we recognize

the truth of this position, but there is no time without its crisis for the moral life, and certainly our age demands this spirit of detachment and this spirit of heroism. For, as Professor James once said, our greatest fear is the fear of poverty. And Kipling gave wise counsel to young men when he said: "Fear the man who has no love of money. He is the dangerous man in a mammonistic age." Not only Jesus but every great soul has appealed to men to cherish the spirit of detachment from the lesser values of life.

And it involves the recognition of all these values, the lowest and the highest of them, as subordinate ends, and in their measure means to the one great divine end of the kingdom of God. They have their own ethical value: this must be recognized; their worth must not be disparaged; their place in life must not be scorned. And yet they gain their greater value, and have their deeper significance, in relation to the supreme end for which all things exist: the final purpose of God. When the lesser values clash with the higher,—when the good is the enemy of the better,—then they must be renounced. The kingdom of God has the right of way in a man's life, in society, in history. When the interests of the kingdom demand it, sacrifice of everything,—wealth, position, domestic ties, even life itself, must be made. The servants of the kingdom in every age and land are cross-bearers.

We observe, once more, that the modern mind has sore need of all the rigor of the transcendent demands that Christian ethics makes.

The grave defect of our age is that, in its ambition for the possession of wealth and its passion for power, it pays little or no attention to the means it uses, nor to the methods it employs. The ethics of the natural process, if the word ethics may be allowed here, is taken over into the human world. The use of power in the securing of ends is a characteristic, not only of our subjugation of nature, but also in our subjugation of men. Not only is the resort to force the last resort of men; it is also the first. The will to power exercises force on its way to gain its end. It is characteristic of our industrial régime, our military system, our social tyranny, and the recrudescence of sav-

agery in lawless outbreaks. A morality that is deeper grounded than the natural process and that is better established than human laws is required for the restraint of men from wrong, and for the achievement of the freedom of mastery in the right.

And a greater good than these goods is required for the satisfaction of life. There is a struggle for the possession of things, which when got do not satisfy. Not in things, nor even in the higher values of culture, nor even in our human relationships, can we find the permanent satisfaction of our lives. Never were more men in possession of wealth than now, never were so many men persons of privilege in having the advantages of a liberal education, and never were our human relationships larger than at present. And yet there is a strange dissatisfaction in the lives of men and women in our day. There are abundant outer resources for pleasure, meagre inner resources of happiness. The psalmist's words are strangely and sadly true of our day: "The Lord gave them their requests, but sent leanness into their soul." There is a poverty of the inner life, which is very different from the poverty of spirit. The age is not rich towards God, though it has abundance of things. And its enduring satisfaction can only come from its ethical wealth, and its peace be found by living at the centre of reality with God.

Finally, it is in Christian ethics that we are to find an adequate dynamic. The higher the ideal, the greater must the dynamic be. If the ideal of our age is not so high as the Christian, yet, even for the realization of its own ideal, the age needs a greater dynamic than its own provides. It is not able to realize its own immanent, this-world ethics. It cannot get men to live for its interests, to devote themselves to its causes, to sacrifice all for its earthly kingdom. It confesses that the forces of economic necessity, human passion, and selfishness are too much for it. And the very forces it has developed, the Frankenstein it has built, it has not the ability to direct. The demand is for moral power to control economic and political forces and to raise men to a higher moral level. For the realization of these lesser ends, to say nothing of the Supreme End, there must be some resource for men of today deeper and stronger than economic

necessities, higher and wiser than human wills, and more permanent than the passing generations. Christian ethics brings with it the power adequate for the realization not only of the lesser ends, but also of the one supreme end, the kingdom of God. Thus in the deep matters of faith and in the fundamental principles of the moral life, we trace the continuity between ourselves and Jesus, our Master.